

# SOUR



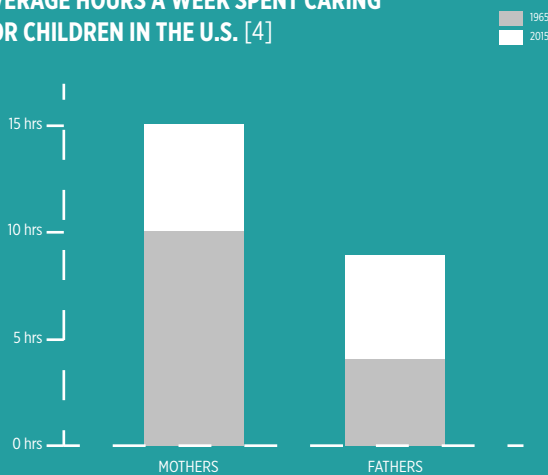
## Quicktakes:

**76.2%** of unpaid care work, across the world, is performed by women. Including looking after children, spouses, partners, or other family members. [1]

**Worldwide**, women spend, on average, four hours and 25 minutes per day on unpaid work, compared with only one hour and 23 minutes for men. [2]

**73.3%** of all women with children under 18, in the United States, were in the labor force in 2019 [3]

**AVERAGE HOURS A WEEK SPENT CARING FOR CHILDREN IN THE U.S. [4]**



## Moms Work from Home

*A Research Case Study*

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit every part of the world in early 2020, we saw an opportunity to identify accessible and flexible solutions that support families in this new era of blended domestic, professional, and educational spaces. We teamed up with HeyMama to identify ways to support working mothers in meeting the increased demands of a blended professional, domestic, and educational space.

### Problem Statement

Today, and for the foreseeable future, there is immense pressure on working mothers to transform their routines and their homes to accommodate extreme constraints of space, time, and other resources.

Sources:  
[1] International Labour Organization, A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality: For a Better Future of Work for All (2019), p. 34, 36.  
[2] International Labour Organization, A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality: For a Better Future of Work for All (2019), p. 36.  
[3] Employment Characteristics of Families – 2019 US Bureau of Labor Statistics press release, April 17, 2020.  
[4] Gretchen Livingston and Kim Parker, 8 Facts About American Dads, Pew Research Center FactTank, June 12, 2013.

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Working mothers manage diverse, complex, and fluctuating responsibilities while caring for their children and themselves, in addition to fulfilling professional and domestic work. Now, because of the extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19 homeschooling has been added to the mix.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light many social inequalities, one of which is the lopsided division of labor in the home. Our research, as well as national data, indicate that women seem to be the most affected compared to men. Even though both men and women are doing more housework and child care than usual, surveys suggest, the division is not more equitable than it was before lockdown.

We investigated the situation and found ways for moms and kids to hack their environments for greater productivity, collaboration, and joy.

## How We Did It

- **Desk research** - our typical baseline to begin research. Secondary sources give us an understanding of what has been done in the past, what questions have been asked and answered, and what remains to be learned.
- **Surveys** - distributed to working mothers across the U.S.
- **Expert interviews** - with child and family psychologists.
- **Diary studies with Openbox** - together we designed a week-long diary study to take place entirely on the WhatsApp messaging platform. We asked participants to respond to our prompts with a range of media - from photographs, maps, and drawings to audio and video recordings.
- **Generative design tools** - in which we included both mothers and their children in the research process allowing for a more inclusive co-creation.

## Outcome

From our learnings, we found ways for moms and kids to hack their environments for greater productivity, collaboration, and joy. Equipped with our research, we are working on creating adaptive and inclusive design interventions that will support family goals and encourage mothers and kids to collaborate.

## Food for Thought:

- **Embracing kids as creators** - a major component of our research (and design) approach was about empowering children to be equal participants. Research activities were designed to give them agency in making decisions and the tools to take initiative.  
*- Understanding who your stakeholders are is one thing, including them in the research and design processes is another.*
- **Accommodating stakeholders** - the diary study's week-long time-frame and the text-based interactions allowed participants to respond in the moment, and more crucially, in the moments that worked best for their schedules.  
*- Thinking about how research methods can be designed to work for your participants not against them.*

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Diary study participants responded to our prompts with a range of media—from audio and video recordings, to photos of maps and drawings—giving us a rich picture of their experiences.

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Above: Images from the daily lives of our diary study participants.  
Below: Images of our research synthesis sessions on Miro.

